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DEPARTMENT FOR INL/LP KBROWN, WHA/CAR DSEARBY

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SUBJECT: LAW ENFORCEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PERIODIC
REPORT SEPT-OCT 2006

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Embassy Santo Domingo Law Enforcement Development program has continued to make significant progress in assisting the Dominican National police's (DNP) transition to a professional civilian authority. Police reform initiatives launched within the last year are consistent with national security recommendations made to the Fernandez administration by independent consultants. Anticipated changes in senior police management could impact long-term police reform. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) A key goal of the Law Enforcement Development Program initiated and supported by the NAS in Santo Domingo is to support the development of a modern, efficient and well trained Dominican police organization that has an institutionalized commitment to professionalism and human rights. Areas of needed reform include better training both for police and investigators, more focus on proactive prevention of crime rather than simply reacting when it occurs, improved criminal intelligence, more effective administrative and the development of a competent Internal Affairs investigations unit that would help insure organizational transparency. These objectives are echoed in the national security plan submitted to the government last year by independent consultants Newlink Political.

¶3. (SBU) The NAS Law Enforcement Development Program is well along in achieving stated objectives. So far this calendar year, 1,824 police officers have completed training in a 40-hour mobile criminal procedure course (Nivelacion de Policia Judicial) initiated and supported by the USG. Senior government officials including President Fernandez, Police Chief Santana Paez and Secretary of Interior and Police Franklyn Almeyda have publicly praised the program. Prosecutors have also praised the course and requested that they be included in the program to enhance cooperation between police investigators and prosecutors.

¶4. (SBU) Also 320 prosecutors have completed a 3-month training program - supported by USAID - that included interviewing techniques and basic criminal investigation taught through the Law Enforcement Development Program. This training also included the participation of a number of police investigators. In August, the National School of Public Ministry (ENMP) training coordinator requested Mission assistance for a follow-up course from September 25 - October 3, 2006. The follow-up course provided training for an additional 60 prosecutors and has now been expanded to include training of prosecutors in Santiago, the Dominican Republic's second largest city. In addition, USAID is

working with the Public Ministry to help come to an agreement with the DNP regarding roles and jurisdiction of prosecutors and police under the new Criminal Procedures Code.

¶15. (SBU) This month 32 officers completed a six-week course entitled Police Instructor Development and Police Intervention Course. The course teaches officers the mechanics of instruction including conducting training needs assessments, developing lesson plans and management of training equipment. The instructor development module is followed by a four week course on police intervention techniques including building searches, field interviews, handling of suspects and crime scene protection. Officers who successfully complete the course will be responsible for instructing other officers from the DNP on the intervention techniques learned in the course.

¶16. (SBU) In September, NAS provided funding for two officers from the Columbian National Police to assist the DNP with a Community Policing project in Barrios Seguros (Secure Neighborhoods). The two officers are currently supervising the implementation of community based policing projects in these neighborhoods and have successfully encouraged community leaders, civilians and police to work together on the project. So far 97 officers have been trained as community policing project officers and the project has begun implementation in four of 13 targeted barrios.

¶17. (SBU) The community policing project has widespread support from within the government and from community leaders. Police Chief Santana Paez stated in a speech in May that he believes community policing offers to be the single best solution to community problems related to crime, education, health and overall welfare of the country. The Police Chief specifically thanked the USG for its support of this project.

¶18. (SBU) During the last 8 months the Embassy has assisted the Police Internal Affairs (IA) division to restructure operations and to draft a new code of conduct, a new procedures protocol and a functions manual to enhance IA performance and accountability. The draft measures have been approved by the Secretary of Interior and Police and are tabled for consideration by the National Security Commission before yearend. As a result of USG support, Internal Affairs is now providing the Mission with a monthly report on officers under investigation for corruption and other charges.

¶19. (SBU) In October - for the first time ever - three Dominican human rights groups recognized National Police Chief Santana Paez for improving the DNP human rights record.

¶10. (SBU) Comment: While there has been much progress on police reform over the last year, continued momentum for police reform remains fragile. Observers speculate whether Police Chief Santana Baez continues to have the support of President Fernandez. Embassy contacts told NAS officers that President Fernandez is unhappy with Santana,s operational management and his penchant for media attention. Some observers are expecting Fernandez to replace the Police Chief next February with second in command Rafael Guzman Fermin or General Santiago Santiago. At this critical juncture, ongoing USG support will play a key role in encouraging the Dominican government to stay the course of reform. We believe that USG support for existing reform projects has provided the Mission with durable contacts at all levels of the police and allowed the USG valuable input into police training and modernization. End Comment.

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